A dictatorship began to emerge from the chaos. Printing plants were taken over by the government. Political clubs were closed. All meetings except those called by the government parties were prohibited. Jails emptied by the March revolution were packed again. After the announcement of peace negotiations with Germany, the front army was no longer a threat to the Communists. It had simply ceased to exist. Regiment after regiment deserted positions and moved to the rear, by train and on foot, carrying with them loot seized in military warehouses.

Our Iskosol friends, on learning of my arrest, helped Emma to reach Petrograd, sacrificing one of the last cars at their disposal. She had travel papers as a delegate from the front to the Petrograd Commission on Elections to the Constituent Assembly. Reaching Petrograd after midnight, she obtained permission to see me before dawn. We were permitted to see each other again for a short time in the following days. Indeed, as a prisoner I had more opportunity to talk with her than I had had in the preceding eight or nine months.

After a week I was called before the investigating judge. To my surprise, he was nobody less than Anton. His assignment was to obtain assurance that I recognized the Council of the People's Commissars. I refused to discuss politics with him and demanded that I be released at once: first, because I had followed the call of duty by defending the All-Russian Executive Committee; second, because, according to the Gatchina truce agreement, no member of the task force was to be arrested. Anton replied that the legal aspect of the affair was above his head.

A few days later I was transferred to a solitary cell in the Fortress of Peter and Paul. Before the revolution, its dungeons had been used for exceptionally dangerous political prisoners, but there was nothing particularly sinister about them except that the complete silence on the corridor was oppressive. The day after my delivery to the fortress, the prison physician paid me a call. He was an unusually tall, lean man with a pale face and sad eyes. "Have you any complaints?" he asked.

"None," I answered without particular friendliness.

He entered the cell, ordered the guard to close the door, and introduced himself. "My name is Manukhin. I was appointed fortress physician after the revolution, when the Tsarist ministers were brought here. Now the members of the Provisional Government are in my care. I found your name on the list of new arrivals. Welcome! If you wish to write to your family, you may give me your letters." Noticing my suspicious look, he added, "It is pure accident that we have not met at the house of Gorky or some other friends we have in common."